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## Surveys Used to Tell the Impacts of Agriculture

How are changes in farm programs affecting agricultural productivity? What crop protection tools are being used to produce high quality agricultural products? What land conservation practices are agricultural producers using? Do these conservation practices improve water, soil, and air quality? To answer these questions and gather reliable, objective information about U.S. agriculture, the Washington Statistical Office of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service will conduct three separate surveys this fall: the Vegetable Chemical Use Survey, the Agricultural Resource Management Survey, and the Conservation Effects Assessment Project.

All three surveys will collect information about fertilizer usage, chemical applications, and pest management practices used on farm operations. Data collection will begin in October 2004 and continue through December. The information from these surveys will be published in a series of reports beginning in 2005.

The Vegetable Chemical Use Survey, focusing on asparagus, processing carrots, processing green peas, processing sweet corn, and bulb onions, will gather information from 352 selected vegetable operations in Washington. This survey is an opportunity for growers to tell their story about their actual crop protection program. These data have been used extensively for obtaining and preserving EPA approvals of necessary crop production products.

Similar to the Vegetable Chemical Use Survey, the Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS) will gather information regarding fertilizer, chemical, and pest management practices from a sample of 300 wheat producers. In addition, wheat producers will be asked cost of production information, field operation characteristics, and irrigation practices. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is reliant on the ARMS data as a highly accurate and unbiased source of information to assess the economic and environmental impacts of regulating agricultural chemicals. By responding to this survey farm operators have a chance to be a voice. You, the farm producers, have the opportunity to be a voice to tell policy makers and the public how you are stewards of the land, how much it costs you to raise your crop, and what further assistance you may need.

The Conservation Effects Assessment Project will be conducted this fall in cooperation with the National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Farm Service Agency (FSA). This survey is designed to create a complete nationwide picture of environmental and conservation management conditions. A sample of 154 operators will be contacted for this survey. In addition to fertilizer, chemical usage, and pest management practices, they will be asked for a variety of information on conservation management as well as information about their irrigation practices. Annual progress reports generated from this survey will be published by the NRCS beginning in 2005.

Washington farm operators selected to participate in this year's surveys have been notified by letter, and interviewers will visit them personally to collect their reports at their convenience. Producers will also have an opportunity to obtain credits toward the recertification of their pesticide licenses through a cooperative agreement with the Washington State Department of Agriculture. These surveys are one way that USDA and producers work together to provide the meaningful, accurate, and objective statistical information and services that help keep U.S. agriculture and rural communities among the most robust in the world.

"We safeguard the confidentiality of all survey responses," Ray Garibay said. "Data about individual operations are used only in conjunction with information from other producers."

All agricultural statistics published by Washington Ag Statistics are available at [www.usda.gov/nass/wa](http://www.usda.gov/nass/wa). For more information, please call (800) 435-5883.